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GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Fifty-second session
Agenda item 157

UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Establishment of the post of Deputy Secretary-General

Note by the Secretariat

97-26540S (E)

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1. In his report of 14 July 1997 entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), the Secretary-General indicated that he would recommend to the General Assembly that the post of Deputy Secretary-General be established. In explaining why he planned to make the proposal, the Secretary-General pointed out that while the multiplicity of the roles performed by him was a major source of strength of the Office, it also limited the attention which any Secretary-General could devote to providing sustained intellectual and organizational leadership. It was also pointed out that while the very breadth of the substantive programmes of the United Nations was a great source of its potential institutional strength, the Organization was not always able to take advantage of those strengths.

2. Under the Charter of the United Nations, the Secretary-General is the chief administrative officer of the Organization. In that capacity, all senior officials in the Organization who head departments, offices, programmes, funds or other entities report directly to him. As a result, some 30 senior officials now report directly to the Secretary-General. While the establishment of Executive Committees facilitates substantive coordination among the senior officials, each continues to be administratively responsible to the Secretary-General. The span of reporting entailed by having this large number of officials reporting to the Secretary-General does not allow for the maintenance of adequate and systematic managerial oversight and supervision. The Secretary-General, therefore, requires the support of a Deputy who would assist him in the exercise of his managerial functions.

3. The nature of the responsibilities of the post of Secretary-General makes it necessary for the Secretary-General to be away from Headquarters on a regular basis. The Secretary-General must attend an array of intergovernmental and regional meetings, visit United Nations offices and missions away from Headquarters and respond to invitations from Member States to undertake official visits. Although the Secretary-General remains in close touch with Headquarters during his absence, the presence of a Deputy to act on his behalf would ensure the maintenance of the smooth and efficient functioning of the Secretariat.

4. In order to introduce a new leadership and management structure within the Secretariat, the Secretary-General has established a Senior Management Group and Executive Committees in the areas of peace and security, economic and social affairs, development cooperation and humanitarian affairs. The Executive Committees are already functioning and have begun to make a contribution to facilitating more concerted and coordinated management of the work of the Organization. There are a number of issues and concerns which cut across the work of all Executive Committees. It is important to ensure, in this context, that the economic and social roots of conflict are taken into account in the work of the Organization in the field of peace and security; that, in addressing complex emergencies, the conditions that permit the resumption of economic and social development are given special attention and are actively promoted; and that the analytical work of the Organization, guided by the Executive Committee on Economic and Social Affairs, and its development operations, under the aegis of the Executive Committee of the United Nations Development Group, are mutually supporting and lead to enhancing the overall impact of the Organization on development. The Deputy Secretary-General would have a special responsibility in taking the lead in harmonizing the actions of the Organization on such

issues. The Deputy Secretary-General would also work closely with the Secretary-General to elevate the profile and leadership of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres, including further efforts to strengthen the United Nations as a leading centre for development policy and development assistance.

5. In summary, the Deputy Secretary-General would have the following responsibilities: (a) to assist the Secretary-General in leading and managing the operations of the Secretariat; (b) to act for the Secretary-General at United Nations Headquarters in the absence of the Secretary-General and in other cases as may be decided by the Secretary-General; (c) to support the Secretary-General in ensuring intersectoral and inter-institutional coherence of activities and programmes that cross functional sectors; (d) to assist the Secretary-General in his efforts to heighten public awareness and increase contact with the representatives of Member States; (e) to represent the Secretary-General at conferences, official functions, ceremonial and other occasions as may be decided by the Secretary-General; and (f) to undertake such special assignments as may be determined from time to time by the Secretary-General. Initially, the Deputy Secretary-General would also be assigned the task of overseeing, on behalf of the Secretary-General, the continuing United Nations reform effort, particularly in the light of the fact that the work of the Office of the Executive Coordinator for United Nations Reform will come to an end on 31 December 1997. The Deputy Secretary-General would also be responsible for the establishment of the Office for Development Financing, and thereafter would oversee its activities.

6. In his report of 11 September 1997 (A/52/303), the Secretary-General outlined the programmatic and financial consequences of the actions and recommendations relating to the work of the Secretariat deriving from his letter to the President of the General Assembly dated 17 March 1997 (A/51/829) and his report on "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950). It is indicated in the former report that the Deputy Secretary-General would be a staff member appointed by the Secretary-General for a period not to exceed his own term of office. In terms of remuneration, it is proposed that the salary of the Deputy be set at the mid-point between that of the Secretary-General and that of the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme. With respect to representation allowance, it is proposed that it be set at $15,000 per year.

7. The immediate office of the Deputy Secretary-General would consist of one Director (D-2), one P-5, one personal assistant and two secretaries in the General Service category. Of these posts, one P-5 and one General Service post would be met from redeployment and the establishment of one D-2 and two General Service posts would be required. In the exercise of his/her functions, the Deputy would also draw on the staff resources available in the Executive Office of the Secretary-General.

8. In carrying out his/her responsibilities, the Deputy Secretary-General would derive his/her authority by delegation from the Secretary-General. It would not be necessary, therefore, for the Deputy to be elected, appointed or confirmed by the General Assembly. The Secretary-General proposes that the term of office of the Deputy would coincide with that of the Secretary-General, who

would make the appointment and who could also terminate it earlier if he so decided. The status of the Deputy Secretary-General would be second only to the Secretary-General and senior to all other programme managers. The Deputy Secretary-General would have no independent authority to report to the General Assembly, the Security Council or other legislative bodies.

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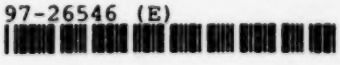
UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Rationalization of the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council

Note by the Secretariat

97-26546 (E)



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1. The present note provides background information on the recommendations relating to paragraph 135 of the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), concerning the consolidation of certain of the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council.

A. Consolidation of the work and functions of the Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development and the Committee on Natural Resources into the Commission on Sustainable Development

2. The terms of reference of the **Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development**, in addition to the implementation of the Nairobi Programme of Action (adopted in 1981), include consideration of the relation between energy on the one hand, and environment and development and relevant sections of Agenda 21 on the other. There is increasing recognition that the question of energy requires more attention in the context of sustainable development. The long-term sustainability of patterns of production and consumption, the need for sustainable energy policies, development of technologies for the economically efficient and environmentally sound use of energy and climate change considerations are issues which require international attention in the context of sustainable development. Since many of these issues fall within the general competence of the Committee, it could become an expert body reporting to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Sustainable Development, with which it would then have much closer linkages. The expert body would continue its consideration of other issues as required by the Nairobi Programme of Action and as reaffirmed by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1992/62 of 31 July 1992, including its system-wide monitoring role in the field of new and renewable sources of energy. At the same time, closer coordination would be required with the United Nations Environment Programme on the question of sustainability and environmental considerations (see subprogramme 10.2 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001[1]) as well as with the regional commissions which have work programmes in this area.

3. The **Committee on Natural Resources** meets in two sessions, dealing in one session with water resources and in the other with mineral resources. The work of the Committee in respect of water resources should be seen in the light of the mandate of the United Nations Environment Programme[2] and the future agenda of the Commission on Sustainable Development beginning at its sixth session,[3] wherein Governments call for a dialogue under the aegis of the Commission aimed at building a consensus on the necessary actions, and in particular on the means of implementation and on tangible results, in order to consider initiating a strategic approach for the implementation of all aspects of the sustainable use of fresh water for social and economic purposes. The proposal to consolidate the activities of the Committee on Natural Resources on this issue with the Commission on Sustainable Development should therefore be viewed against this background. At the Secretariat level, consolidation has taken place in the context of the organization of the new Department of Economic and Social Affairs. At the inter-agency level, the ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources, acting as a task manager, reports to the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development, which in turn makes the task managers' reports available as background documents to the Commission on Sustainable Development.

4. On the question of mineral resources, the regional commissions have developed substantive capacities in this area.[4] Advisory services were decentralized to the regional commissions for this purpose. The main thrust of activities in this area, including in the context of subprogramme 8.2, is related to the sustainability of production and consumption patterns as well as environmentally sound production practices. These questions could be addressed by the Commission on Sustainable Development should the Commission decide that the question of mineral resources should be included in its future agenda. Regional commissions could be requested to provide inputs in the context of their work programmes indicated above, including on questions of sustainability of production and consumption patterns. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) could provide inputs with regard to mineral resources from the perspective of the developmental implications, including commodity trade and commodity dependence.

5. The recommendation with regard to the consolidation of the work of the above committees with the Commission on Sustainable Development could be considered in the following form:

(a) The Committee on New and Renewable Sources of Energy and Energy for Development could become an expert advisory body reporting to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(b) The work of the Committee on Natural Resources having to do with water resources could be absorbed by the Commission on Sustainable Development, on the understanding that the Commission could set up an expert body to deal with the full range of water-related issues falling within the mandate of the former Committee and its own agenda;

(c) The work on mineral resources could be undertaken by a group of experts on this matter reporting to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Sustainable Development.

B. The Commission on Science and Technology for Development to become a subsidiary body of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board with the UNCTAD secretariat continuing to provide the substantive servicing secretariat of the Commission

6. The **Commission on Science and Technology for Development** at present reports to the Economic and Social Council. The servicing secretariat was consolidated in the UNCTAD secretariat in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/212 B of 6 May 1993. The fundamental rationale for consolidating the work on technology in UNCTAD was that the nexus between trade, investment, technology and services and their financial underpinnings was increasingly recognized in a variety of policy initiatives both nationally and internationally, including by the General Assembly, which reiterated that UNCTAD was the most appropriate focal point within the United Nations for the integrated treatment of key issues including trade, finance, investment, services and technology. In the context of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations, services, technology and investment were seen a 'single undertaking'. At the ninth session of UNCTAD, the Conference invited the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly to consider the relationship between the Centre for Science and

Technology for Development and UNCTAD, taking account of the particular responsibilities of UNCTAD in this field, including its programme of work.

7. The interface between the Commission and the UNCTAD secretariat, its substantive servicing secretariat, needs to be enhanced. UNCTAD has through the years acquired considerable capacity in questions related to the transfer and development of technology. The issue of science and technology is a major area of concern as it is increasingly one of the important factors determining the competitiveness of countries and firms. In order to ensure the integrated treatment of science and technology with other sectors, the Trade and Development Board could oversee the work of the Commission. In line with the mandate of the Commission, it would be understood that it would remain available to serve the system as a whole on matters of a general interest related to science and technology.

8. In order to further enhance the capacity of the Commission to discharge its mandate effectively, its expertise would need to be built around a well-organized and focused programme of work dealing with issues of relevance to the international community. Its programme of work could be of two-year cycles and its members chosen in accordance with their expertise in the areas identified in the programme of work. Substantive servicing by the UNCTAD secretariat and a high level of expertise in the membership of the Commission would obviate the need for the Commission to engage consultants.

9. The election of members of the Commission could be undertaken by the Trade and Development Board. The Board would also consider and approve the programme of work and the dates and venues of the Commission's meetings as well as of its inter-sessional meetings. The UNCTAD secretariat would ensure the substantive servicing of the Commission. Requests for the provision of expert advice could be received from the subsidiary machinery of the Economic and Social Council or from the rest of the system through the Council. The Bureau of the Trade and Development Board would finalize the Commission's agenda for the given biennium in consultation with the Bureau of the Economic and Social Council.

C. Consolidation of the functions of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs into a single Commission. The International Narcotics Control Board would report to the new Commission

10. The recommendation to consolidate the functions of the **Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice** and the **Commission on Narcotic Drugs** into a single Commission is predicated on the need to identify the common elements that link various aspects of organized crime and to develop comprehensive policies which can be conducive to combating these phenomena more effectively at both the national and the international levels. This is particularly relevant in the context of the relationship between the work of the Subcommission on Illicit Drug Traffic and Related Matters in the Near and Middle East and the regional meetings of the operational heads of national drug law enforcement agencies for Asia and the Pacific, for Africa, for Latin America and the Caribbean, with subprogramme 12.1 (para. 12.3 (c)) related to crime prevention and criminal justice. The latter places emphasis on the implementation of the Naples Political Declaration and Global Action Plan against Organized Transnational

Crime, taking into account the growing dangers of links between organized transnational crime, terrorist crimes and drug trafficking. There are undoubtedly many elements in both work programmes which do not lend themselves to such consolidation. Such elements are particularly germane to the individual issue areas, such as the questions related to the criminal justice system, the treatment of offenders, crop substitution, drug abuse prevention and drug control. Such areas of work would require separate treatment, entailing different sets of expertise which can be organized around expert bodies as they are currently constituted. Furthermore, technical assistance activities in all areas need to be substantially enhanced.[5]

D. The Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting to be maintained as an expert body reporting through the UNCTAD Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues

11. The **Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting** previously reported to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Transnational Corporations. This programme was transferred to UNCTAD in 1993 along with the Centre on Transnational Corporations. The General Assembly, in its resolution 49/130 of 19 December 1994, decided that the Commission on Transnational Corporations should become a commission of the Trade and Development Board and be renamed the Commission on International Investment and Transnational Corporations. In the same resolution the General Assembly decided "that the Commission will keep under review the work of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts on International Standards of Accounting and Reporting" (para. 5).

12. At the ninth session of UNCTAD, former subsidiary bodies of the Trade and Development Board were abolished and three new commissions were established. Among them was the Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Matters. A decision was also made to convene no more than 10 expert groups per year. Questions have now been raised as to the current status of the Intergovernmental Working Group of Experts in the context of UNCTAD. The Economic and Social Council, at its organizational session of 1997 elected the membership of the Intergovernmental Working Group through 1999. Taking this into account and in view of the fact that no formal decision has been taken with regard to a change of status of the Intergovernmental Working Group, either by the Council or by the General Assembly, it can be assumed that the Council continues to consider it as one of its expert bodies. In the light of the above, a formal decision by the Council on the status of the Intergovernmental Working Group would help to clarify the ambiguity presently surrounding that body. As many delegations find its work to be highly useful, the recommendation is to maintain the Intergovernmental Working Group as a body reporting through the UNCTAD Commission on Investment, Technology and Related Financial Issues. It would be for the Trade and Development Board, however, to determine whether its meetings should be included within the statutory limit of 10 expert group meetings per year as defined by the ninth session of UNCTAD,[6] or in addition thereto.

E. The work of the Ad Hoc Group of Experts in International Tax Matters to be reviewed after the completion of its present mandate

13. The Economic and Social Council, in its resolution 1273 (XLIII) of 4 August 1967, requested the Secretary-General to set up a group of experts to explore ways and means for facilitating tax treaties between developed and developing countries. A group of experts was set up for this purpose and in 1980 finalized the United Nations Model Double Taxation Convention between Developed and Developing Countries. Subsequently the Ad Hoc Group of Experts on Cooperation in Tax Matters was established by the Council in 1980 to examine the question of international tax evasion and avoidance 'with a view to working out, as soon as possible, proposals for international cooperation to combat such [tax] evasion and avoidance'.[7] The Group consists of 20 tax experts from 10 developed and 15 developing countries, nominated by Governments but acting in their personal capacities. The Group generally meets biennially. The Council may wish to review the future of the Group upon completion of its current mandate.

F. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to report to the Economic and Social Council through the Commission on Human Rights

14. The Economic and Social Council, in 1978, decided to set up a sessional working group on the implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Later, in 1985, the Council decided that the sessional working group would be renamed the **Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**. The Committee has 18 members who are experts with recognized competence in the field of human rights, serving in their personal capacities and selected from among parties to the Convention. It is recalled that the Commission on Human Rights has established a Working Group on the Right to Development to identify obstacles to the implementation and realization of the Declaration on the Right to Development.[8] In 1996, the Commission decided to establish an intergovernmental group of experts with a mandate to elaborate a strategy for the implementation of the Declaration in its integrated and multidimensional aspects. In the light of the close relationship between some of the issue areas in the context of the Covenant and work of the Group of Experts and in order to ensure that there is sufficient cross-fertilization and coordination between the work of the two bodies, both bodies would benefit if the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were submitted to the Council through the Commission on Human Rights.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/51/6/Rev.1).

[2] Ibid., programme 10, subprogramme 10.1, paras. 10.5-10.7.

[3] See A/S-19/29, para. 35.

[4] See subprogrammes 14.2, 14.5, 15.4, 17.7 and 18.1 of the medium-term plan for the period 1998-2001 (Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifty-first Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/51/6/Rev.1).

[5] Regarding changes at the secretariat level, see paras. 144 and 145 of the report of the Secretary-General (A/51/950).

[6] See A/51/308, annex, paras. 114 and 115.

[7] Economic and Social Council resolution 1980/13, para. 7.

[8] General Assembly resolution 41/128, annex.

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UNITED NATIONS REFORM: MEASURES AND PROPOSALS

Disarmament

Note by the Secretariat

97-27261 (E)

1. In its resolution 37/99 K of 13 December 1982, the General Assembly, as a reflection of the central role and primary responsibility that Member States assigned to the United Nations in the field of disarmament, called for the establishment of a Department for Disarmament Affairs. Consistent with the legislative mandate emanating from that resolution and in the spirit of giving greater visibility to the Organization's mandate in this area, the Secretary-General, in his report entitled "Renewing the United Nations: a programme for reform" (A/51/950), indicated his intention to place the United Nations disarmament programme under a department to be headed by an Under-Secretary-General. This action, as suggested in the report, would effect a managerial reorganization of Secretariat capacities to respond to the priorities of Member States.

2. The end of the cold war has opened opportunities that should lead to more decisive international efforts in the field of disarmament. Weapons of mass destruction continue to be of primary importance despite significant progress achieved to outlaw chemical and biological weapons and to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation regimes. Nuclear disarmament must therefore be pursued more vigorously, particularly by the nuclear-weapon States, with a view to the progressive reduction and complete elimination of nuclear weapons at the earliest possible date. At the same time, the international community has been increasingly concerned with the spread of conventional weapons, especially in relation to landmines and small arms which are used extensively in regional and subregional conflicts.

3. In this connection, it is noted that the programme budget for the biennium 1996-1997, as approved by the General Assembly, stated that efforts in the promotion of arms limitation and disarmament were focused "on weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear ones", but were becoming "increasingly concerned with the growth and proliferation of various types of conventional weapons".[1]

4. The proposed programme budget for the biennium 1998-1999 maintains this same approach. It states:

> "The main focus during the biennium 1998-1999 will be on weapons of mass destruction, notably nuclear weapons. Their systematic and progressive reduction, with the ultimate goal of complete elimination, remains a priority task of the international community. At the same time, the disturbingly high number of conflicts in various subregions of the world has called attention to the destabilizing effects and the destructive power of conventional arms, especially of the uncontrolled flow and accumulation of small arms. The need to curb their proliferation and to promote confidence-building measures, openness and transparency in all spheres of the military activities of States at the global, regional and subregional levels is increasingly recognized."[2]

5. In line with this statement, in the revised programme estimates submitted on 11 September 1997 (A/52/303) it is noted that the emergence of new dangers and actors has added fresh urgency to the tasks that the United Nations is called upon to play in the area of disarmament.

6. The establishment of the department takes fully into account current trends and developments and, in particular, Member States' expressed interest in finding ways to address them. It does not, however, detract from the main focus of the Organization's activities in the area of disarmament which, as currently mandated, will continue to be on weapons of mass destruction.

7. In this connection, it is recalled that in resolution 51/45 C of 10 December 1996, the General Assembly decided, subject to the emergence of a consensus on its objective and agenda, to convene its fourth special session devoted to disarmament in 1999. As indicated in the fifth preambular paragraph of the resolution, such a special session would "offer an opportunity to review, from a perspective more in tune with the current international situation, the most critical aspects of the process of disarmament". Furthermore, as stated in the eighth preambular paragraph, the special session could "set the future course of action in the field of disarmament, arms control and related security matters".

8. Should the General Assembly decide to convene the fourth special session, a priority task for the department would be to assist Member States, in every way possible, in the process leading to the convening of that session. Beyond the existing disarmament programme, the department will provide a structure capable of carrying out such emerging mandates as Member States may entrust to the Organization. Any adjustments from the current programme would only result from the successful conclusion of negotiations in the appropriate multilateral forums.

9. The Conference on Disarmament is the single global disarmament negotiating forum and has a unique relationship with the United Nations. The Secretary-General of the Conference also acts as the personal representative of the Secretary-General by whom he is appointed and to whom he reports directly on matters pertaining to the work of the Conference. Providing staff support to, and servicing of the Conference on Disarmament is one of the major functions of the existing Secretariat capacity in the field of disarmament in Geneva. Such capacity will be maintained at the present levels as an integral part of the new structure.

Notes

[1] Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/50/6/Rev.1), para. 2.81.

[2] Ibid., Fifty-second Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/52/6/Rev.1), para. 2.121.